



**KING EDWARD VI
NORTHFIELD
SCHOOL FOR GIRLS**

Educational excellence for our City

King Edward VI Northfield school for Girls

JANUARY 2023 - MAY 2024

SCHOOL ANTI-BULLYING
POLICY

Statement of Principles for Our Behaviour Policy

Our principles are guided by the cooperative values that permeate our school:

The right to feel safe at all times:

Everyone in our school has a right to feel safe within our school. This sense of safety is based in mutual respect between staff and pupils and between peers. All members of our school community must be aware that bullying and intimidation is unacceptable. This is true of behaviour in or out of school.

Social Responsibility:

We believe that all our pupils will only gain maximum benefit from the teaching our staff provide if high standards of behaviour are maintained in all classes. We believe that sanctions must be applied consistently to ensure this is the case, as well as through positive recognition, praise and rewards.

Equality and Solidarity:

Discrimination on the basis of disability, race, ethnicity, sexuality, gender or background is abhorrent to the principles of our happy and inclusive school. Our legal (Equality Act 2010) and ethical duty means that any such discrimination will be challenged by both staff and pupils. We constantly reinforce this expectation through our ethos, our curriculum and our assembly programme.

Openness and Transparency:

Pupils should clearly understand the school rules. Expected standards of behaviour will be displayed in all classrooms. Details of behaviour incidents will be effectively communicated to parents. Sanctions will be clearly understood by parents, pupils and staff alike.

Equity and Caring for Others:

All pupils and staff will understand that it is their responsibility to reinforce acceptable behaviour and challenge unacceptable behaviour. Staff will recognise the importance of reinforcing positive behaviour through the rewards systems that operate within school.

Democracy:

Staff, parents and pupils are able to influence the direction of the behaviour policy and management in our school through the Behaviour Working Party (staff), the school cooperative council (pupils) and the Cooperative Trust Forum (parents, pupils and staff).

Bullying is any behaviour which is deliberately intended to hurt, threaten or frighten another person or group of people. It is usually unprovoked and is often repeated and can continue for a long period of time. Bullying behaviours are aggressive although they may not seem so.

Bullying can include a wide range of behaviours. These may be:

- ✦ Physical abuse
 - ✦ Threats of physical harm
 - ✦ Verbal abuse
 - ✦ Teasing
 - ✦ Theft
 - ✦ Damaging property
 - ✦ Making someone act against their will
 - ✦ Isolation from group
 - ✦ Online - Cyber bullying
- Types of bullying:**

Most incidences of bullying originate from relationship issues. However, bullying can also originate from deep-seated prejudices, including:

- Racism
- Homophobic Transphobic
- Prejudice against those with disabilities

Bullying of these and related types require additional measures regarding education of the perpetrator, and additional support for the victim.

Sometimes, the bullying can take very subtle forms, such as a nasty look, which are difficult to detect by adults but are still terrifying for the pupil on the receiving end because they imply what might happen. Most bullying is well hidden and carefully disguised.

Pupils may have occasional fights or disagreements with each other. This is not a form of bullying and should be dealt as per our behaviour policy. Equally, occasionally a pupil will engage in behaviour which is interpreted as harmful or threatening but have done so without intent. This sort of thoughtless conduct will not be categorised as bullying in the first instance.

In schools, bullying may sometimes be a weaker pupil taken advantage of by another individual or group of girls who want to prove they are stronger. Often, bullying occurs within a friendship group and may involve complex power relationships.

No pupil enjoys being bullied. It makes them feel unhappy and they often blame themselves. A persistently bullied child quickly loses self-confidence and self-esteem. They find it difficult to concentrate on their work and will absent themselves from school to avoid being bullied.

Other possible signs of bullying include:

- ✦ pupils being by themselves at break times
- ✦ avoidance of certain days/lessons
- ✦ sudden underachievement
- ✦ graffiti insulting individuals or groups of pupils
- ✦ pupils not willing to approach adults to discuss problems
- ✦ Pupils appearing upset
- ✦ developing physical symptoms
- ✦ being excluded from group work

Preventative measures:

Our behaviour strategy stresses the importance of staff being on time to lessons and initially meeting classes in the corridor rather than in classrooms. Both strategies have been proved to reduce potential bullying opportunities between lessons. Our behaviour strategy focuses on rewarding the positive, including good behaviour.

Be vigilant for any possible signs of bullying within the classroom (see above).

Strategies for encouraging students to tell a member of staff if they or a friend are experiencing bullying behaviour

Form teachers need to draw their form's attention to the various avenues that pupils can take if they or a friend are being bullied. These are on posters displayed across the school:

"If you are bullied at school you can seek help from:

□ Your form group PALS' - for Year 7 □ Your form teacher or

Mentor □ Your Head of Year

□ Any teacher you want to talk to"

- ✦ When pupils are reminded of these, please stress that we take all allegations seriously.
- ✦ Year Heads will also refer to our lines of support during year assemblies as and when the need arises.

Guidelines for immediate and long term actions should bullying occur

- ✦ Form teachers, subject teachers, and support staff should refer any incident involving alleged bullying initially to the Year Head, as soon as possible.
- ✦ Some pupils do not want to take the matter further – they just want to tell somebody. In these instances the issue should then be discussed with the Year Head who will then discuss with the pupil prior to further action being taken if deemed necessary.

A problem-solving approach provides the most effective immediate responses to bullying.

These enable the teacher to work with the students involved to resolve the situation immediately and identify long-term strategies to prevent re-occurring. The problem is acknowledged. The pupils involved are interviewed individually and each agrees how they can personally help to resolve the situation.

The aim of the meetings with the pupils who are the alleged bullies, is to acknowledge that the student who is being bullied is 'having a bad time'. This acknowledgement is the point of common concern and enables the teacher to ask each student to take an active role in changing the situation.

The meeting with the victim focuses on the bullying behaviours she has experienced and identifying a strategy which she could adopt to prevent or stop the bullying.

In the following weeks the teacher checks back with all concerned again to discuss how successful or unsuccessful each student feels they have been in stopping the bullying. Students are asked to maintain or increase their efforts.

This approach does not preclude appropriate sanctions also being put in place depending on the likely seriousness of the behaviours interpreted as bullying. These sanctions may include Internal Exclusion, Detention or Suspension. Contact with parents of all parties is also best practice.

This approach also does not preclude a restorative approach, whereby a pupil who has engaged in bullying behaviours and who, through the intervention of staff, comes to appreciate the harm they have caused is able to apologise to their victim and their victim is able to explain the impact the behaviour had on them. Restorative approaches can be hugely powerful, but will only be attempted in incidences where staff have confidence that the offending pupil has reflected genuinely and shows an appropriate level of maturity.

Never ignore suspected bullying

Don't make assumptions

Listen carefully to all accounts

Adopt a problem solving approach

Follow-up shortly after intervention and some time after to check the bullying hasn't resumed

Guidelines for action should bullying or violence re-occur involving the same students

- ✦ The SLT pastoral lead should be informed and a meeting arranged with the pupils concerned, the Deputy Head and the Year Head
- ✦ Significant sanctions will be put in place (see Behaviour Policy for an explanation of the range of school sanctions).
- ✦ Parents are invited to school to meet with the SLT pastoral lead and/or Year Head

This is particularly effective in deterring persistent bullying. Parents need to be made aware that the school takes bullying seriously and so they should be informed that their child has been bullying other pupils.

A meeting with parents would provide the opportunity for collaborative strategies to be identified which could help the pupil modify behaviour.

The involvement of outside agencies may be discussed as a possible option, as may referral to Sharing Panel (see Behaviour Policy).

Guidelines for action when there is a suspicion of bullying but disputed evidence.

The member of staff should inform the Year Head and the morning briefing session/ email used to ask all staff teaching the particular pupil, to be vigilant and report any further concerns to the Year Head. A bullying questionnaire can also be issued to the class to allow a full expression of views in complete confidentiality.

Meanwhile the school will act on what is 'most likely' to have occurred (the balance of probability), based on knowledge of the pupils involved, whilst seeking additional information.

Procedures for monitoring the success of the policy

The number of referrals relating to bullying will be monitored by the Year Heads and reported to the SLT pastoral lead at their regular meetings. Reference to trends in bullying incidents will be made in the School Self Evaluation document. The school council will be used as a vehicle to monitor the pupils' perceptions of the effectiveness of the policy. Year Heads will conduct annual focus groups and / or questions which will question perceptions around bullying. Details of the monitoring process will be forwarded to the Pastoral Committee of the Governing Body.

What can I do as a teacher?

- ✦ Manage your relationships with students assertively rather than aggressively in line with the behaviour framework.
- ✦ Always take bullying seriously
- ✦ Form tutors can take regular opportunities to talk to their form about bullying and what action to take if they encounter it.
- ✦ Encourage pupils to tell a member of staff if they are being bullied or if they know someone is being bullied.
- ✦ Be vigilant for signs of bullying. Always investigate if you suspect a pupil may be being bullied.
- ✦ Be prepared to respond quickly and appropriately when you find out that someone is being bullied.
- ✦ When investigating a bullying situation, remember that bullying is usually carefully hidden and difficult to detect. A pupil who is directly accused of bullying may vigorously

deny any involvement. It can be hard to establish facts. A problem solving approach which avoids blaming can be more effective in clarifying the situation and in achieving change.

- ✦ Report any situation quickly, in writing, to the Head of Year or the SLT pastoral lead.
- ✦ Be on time for lessons, be prompt to duty and actively encourage good corridor conduct. Take time to consciously promote the school's cooperative values.

Dealing with homophobic language

- While homophobic bullying is rare (see Learning mentor interviews and governors bullying reports), we know that homophobic language can cause emotional hurt and can create a climate where pupils may believe homophobia is acceptable.
- If a pupil uses homophobic language (such as 'this work is so gay'), their teacher will tell them this language is inappropriate and offensive.
- If a pupil persists, they will be removed from lesson and referred to the Head of Year for further sanctions / interventions.

Dealing with Cyber Bullying

- Cyber bullying is a form of bullying via communication technology like text messages, emails or websites. It takes many forms:
 - a) sending threatening or abusive text messages, voice notes or e-mails
 - b) personally or anonymously, making insulting comments about someone on a website, social networking site (e.g. Instagram), chat facility (e.g. WhatsApp) or online diary (blog/Twitter)
 - c) making, or sharing, derogatory or embarrassing videos of someone via mobile phone or e-mail
- Bullying can be done verbally, in text or images e.g. graffiti, text messaging, voice notes, e-mail or postings on websites. The use of the Internet, text messages, voice notes, email, video or audio to bully another pupil or member of staff will not be tolerated.
- Sanctions will be issued by the school in line with the severity of the incident and may be internal or external suspensions or permanent exclusion in the most serious cases.
- It should be noted that the use of ICT to bully could be against the law. Abusive language or images used to bully, harass or threaten another, whether spoken or written (through electronic means), may be libellous and contravene the Harassment Act 1997 or the Telecommunications Act (1984).
- Cyber Bullying is viewed in the same light as any other form of bullying and we will follow the same procedures and sanctions. The school has in place an e-Safety policy, which should be referred to in conjunction with this policy.
- In accordance with the Government's "Searching, screening and confiscation advice for schools" dated January 2018, the school has the right to examine and delete files from pupils' personal devices, e.g., mobiles phones, where there is good reason to do so. This power applies to all schools and there is no need to have parental consent to search through a young person's mobile phone.
- If a member of staff seizes an electronic device, and there is reasonable ground to suspect that it contains evidence in relation to an offence, the police must be contacted as soon as reasonably possible and their advice and guidance will be followed.

What can I do as a pupil?

- ✦ There are no innocent bystanders when it comes to bullying. If you witness an incident you must do something to help.
- ✦ If you are bullied tell someone – a peer counsellor, your teacher, form teacher, or Year Head. Tell your parents.
- ✦ You can help to prevent bullying by:
 1. fetching help and telling someone
 2. showing disapproval
 3. giving support to those bullied
 4. being careful about teasing and personal remarks. Think about how you like to be spoken to and treated by those around you.
 5. Be aware that pushing, shoving and throwing things is unacceptable, even when directed toward pupils within your friendship group.

The Curriculum

- ✦ Help pupils to develop positive strategies and assertive skills by checking that anti- bullying work is incorporated into curriculum content as well as through teaching approaches.
- ✦ Use peer pressure against bullying
- ✦ Provide information about our anti-bullying policy on Primary School visits, on induction day and on the first day in September.
- ✦ The PSE programme reinforces the policy.
- ✦ The Drama curriculum provides the opportunity for role play around this issue.
- ✦ The policy is to be openly displayed and copies given to pupils and parents.
- ✦ Our curriculum encourages respect and tolerance, particularly through PSD, but also through a range of other subjects (see SRE audit). Issues of racism, homophobia and prejudice against people with disabilities are explicated covered

What can I do as a parent?

- ✦ Watch for signs of distress, e.g. unwillingness to attend school, requests for more money, frequent illness, pretending to be ill, etc.
- ✦ Take an active interest in your child's friendships.
- ✦ If you think your daughter is being bullied inform school immediately.
- ✦ With help from school try to devise strategies that will support your child.
- ✦ Do not give in to bullying. Be prepared to contact the school again should it be necessary.
- ✦ If you are unhappy with how an incident has been dealt with, use the Complaints Policy to have the issues you raise re-examined.

Maintenance of the Policy

The pupils will be reminded of our policy as a matter of course when they are reminded of the Behaviour strategy.

How can I change this policy?

Write to the governing board (via the clerk to the governors – the school office) with the recommended changes and the rationale for the proposed changes and the appropriate sub-committee of the governing board will consider your proposals and inform you of their decision in writing.